

Digital Records Curation Programme

Week 1:

Digital Records: Authenticity and Reliability

Learning outcomes

At the end of this class, students should be able to:

- explain what a digital record is
- explain the concepts of authenticity and reliability in relation to digital records

In our previous class

We discussed digital records in the information society.

What are some of the issues that came up in our discussion?

What is a digital record?

Digital records are composed on binary code:

0001011

And all digital records have formats:

.pdf .docx .mp4

What is a digital record?

Not all digital objects are digital records.

ISO15489 (2016) defines a record as:

information created, received and maintained as *evidence* and as an asset by an organization or person, in pursuit of legal obligations or in the *transaction* of business

Identifying Digital Records

Imagine you are working in an organisation. Consider:

- the types of digital records you might expect to find in their organisation
 - how the records are created
 - where you might expect to find them (on what systems, platforms, devices, etc.)
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- Group 1: Bank
 - Group 2: Hospital

Authenticity and Reliability: Trustworthiness

You have identified a range of digital records, in a range of formats and across a range of devices and locations.

Some of these records will be better than others, in terms of the evidence they provide.

Would you trust all of these records equally?

Authenticity and Reliability: Trustworthiness

- Computerisation and the growth in digital records
- Trusting these new formats
- Terminology
- InterPARES

- Key terms:
 - Trustworthiness
 - Authenticity
 - Reliability

Defining Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness depends on reliability and authenticity.

Reliability – ‘The trustworthiness of a record as a statement of fact. It exists when a record can stand for the fact it is about, and is established by examining the completeness of the record's form and the amount of control exercised on the process of its creation.’

Authenticity – ‘The trustworthiness of a record as a record; i.e., the quality of a record that is what it purports to be and that is free from tampering or corruption’.

Authenticity

- Integrity - The quality of being complete and unaltered in all essential respects.
- Identity - The whole of the characteristics of a document or a record that uniquely identify it and distinguish it from any other document or record.

Integrity

The integrity of a record refers to its wholeness and soundness: a record has integrity when it is complete and uncorrupted in all its essential respects... its physical integrity, such as the proper number of bit strings, may be compromised, provided that the articulation of the content and any required annotations and elements of documentary form remain the same.

The UK National Archives report *Generic Requirements for Sustaining Electronic Information Over Time* (TNA 2006) reflects the privileged place of documentary form and content over media or carrier in the InterPARES regime, stating 'a record is considered to be essentially complete and uncorrupted if the message that it is meant to communicate in order to achieve its purpose in unaltered'.

Identity

‘The identity of a record refers to the distinguishing character of a record, that is, the attributes of a record that uniquely characterize it and distinguish it from other records. From an archival-diplomatic perspective, such attributes include: the names of the persons concurring in its formation (that is, its author, addressee, writer, and originator); its date(s) of creation (that is, the date it was made, received, and set aside) and its date(s) of transmission; an indication of the action or matter in which it participates; the expression of its archival bond, which links it to other records participating in the same action (for example, a classification code or other unique identifier); as well as an indication of any attachment(s) since an attachment is considered an integral part of a record.’

Distinguishing Reliability from Authenticity

Can a record be reliable but inauthentic?

Can a record be unreliable but authentic?

Authenticity and Reliability in the readings

- What did the Digital Preservation Handbook have to say about maintaining trust in digital records?
- According to Duranti, what is the value of archival institutions in relation to the trustworthiness of records? Do you agree?

Controls for Authenticity

- Metadata
- Systems of Control
- Trusted Custodians
- Transparency of Controls

Task

Infographics are graphic visual representations of information, data or knowledge intended to present information quickly and clearly.

- Create an account at [Piktochart.com](https://www.piktochart.com)
- Use Piktochart to create an infographic that explains the concepts and relationships in InterPARES Ontology C

In summary...

- In the information society, archivists and records managers have a role in providing access and ensuring trustworthiness
- Trustworthiness involves reliability and authenticity
- Reliability stems from record-making, authenticity is the concern of record-keeping
- Authenticity involves identity (uniqueness) and integrity (free from tampering or corruption)
- Both of these depend on:
 - the capture and preservation of adequate metadata
 - robust record-keeping systems
 - ethical and documented custodianship

Any questions?



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